

21 January 1966

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR**

**FROM : Mr. Abbot Smith**

**SUBJECT : The Nigerian NIE and Its Post Mortem**

1. Here is a summary of what happened in preparing the Nigerian estimate and its Post Mortem.

a. Coordination of the NIE with Agency representatives involved lengthy and painful arguments with State, whose representative believed that we greatly underestimated the factors making for stability in Nigeria. Finally State took a footnote of dissent, in effect to the whole paper.

b. We all had the same evidence to go on. Therefore, the extraordinary disagreement moved us to prepare an unusually elaborate Post Mortem. We hoped that additional data might produce more concord of opinion before another paper had to be drafted.

c. At the pre-USIB briefing you raised the question of what should be done with the Post Mortem. This led to

d. The USIB Secretary's recommendation that it be referred to the CCPC.

e. This recommendation was discussed at length at the USIB meeting. [ ] argued that the problems of Nigeria were not sufficiently critical to justify action by the CCPC as recommended. Hence, USIB merely noted the Post Mortem. (Minutes attached)

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f. We do not know what, if anything, DIA did as a result of the Post Mortem. (The DIA representatives had in fact taken little part in discussions of the estimate.)

g. State sent the Post Mortem to the Embassy in Nigeria and we have a document (attached), the last paragraph of which indicates how it was treated in the Embassy.

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25X1 [redacted] Experience has shown, however, that even with most excellent reporting, coups will happen here and there without forewarning; [redacted] 25X1

25X1 3. A more useful comment would be this: so far as we know -- and we do not know precisely -- the difference of opinion between the State analysts and our own persisted from the time of the Estimate in August right down to the time of the coup. [redacted] 25X1

25X1 [redacted] Even this is not certain, however. Differences between us and State were mainly in judgment. It is possible that these differences of judgment would have continued even if the reporting had been far more accurate and voluminous. This is one of the facts of life about estimating.

4. Finally, it is still not proven that action by the CCPC would have produced better results; or that Nigeria is of that degree of criticality which warrants attention by the CCPC. But it seems demonstrated that increased attention to Post Mortems is desirable, so long as our office restrains itself to preparing such documents on subjects which are important as well as obscure.